



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PETITIONS
rec'd 2.6.08

MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
THE HON JOEL FITZGIBBON MP

Mrs Julia Irwin MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

30 MAY 2008


Dear Madam Chair

Thank you for your letter of 8 May 2008 concerning a petition submitted by Mr Graham Perrett MP, Member for Moreton, regarding Australia's involvement in Iraq. I note that my colleague, the Hon Stephen Smith MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has written a response to address a number of issues raised in the petition. I would like to address the request to withdraw Australian troops from Iraq immediately.

Australian forces are engaged in Iraq at the request of the Government of Iraq, and under the authorisation of successive United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The Australian Government is committed to withdrawing all combat troops from Iraq by mid-2008. Overwatch Battle Group (West) and its integrated training element, the Australian Army Training Team – Iraq, will be withdrawn from southern Iraq at the conclusion of the current rotation in mid-2008.

Australia will continue to support the Iraqi people, including through naval deployments in the Gulf to provide assistance in securing the long-term security of Iraqi exports. The Government is proud of the contribution by the Australian Defence Force which, in partnership with the Iraqi people and Coalition partners, continues to work towards creating a democratic, secure and prosperous future for Iraq.

I hope this information assists you in responding to the petition.

Yours sincerely

JOEL FITZGIBBON